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CHARACTER EDUCATION BASED ON AKHLAKUL KARIMAH ENRICHED WITH MODERN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY APPROACHES

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Abstract - *This qualitative research examines the integration of classical Islamic moral values (akhlakul karimah) with modern positive psychology approaches to develop a comprehensive character education framework. Through systematic literature review, the study explores points of convergence between both traditions, including recognition of innate human potential for goodness, emphasis on character strengths development, and the ultimate goal of achieving meaningful happiness and well-being. Positive psychology's classification of character strengths aligns significantly with akhlakul karimah values, enabling more standardized measurement instruments for moral education evaluation. Concepts such as resilience, post-traumatic growth, and well-being from positive psychology enrich traditional Islamic concepts like patience, trust in God, and true happiness. Strength-based approaches, positive emotions focus, and quality social relationships represent areas where positive psychology significantly contributes to strengthening moral education. Modern teaching methods including project-based learning and socio-emotional skills development can be integrated with classical methods such as role modeling and habituation. The integrated framework offers more effective, evidence-based, and spiritually grounded character education applicable across various educational settings. This research provides theoretical foundations and practical guidance for developing character education that harmoniously combines religious values and scientific approaches.*

Keywords: moral values, Islamic education, positive psychology, character education, virtues, well-being, integration.

INTRODUCTION

Character education based on akhlakul karimah has been a main foundation of the Islamic education system since its early development, in which the formation of morals and ethics is placed as the highest goal of the learning process (Madum & Daimah, 2024). This concept is rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which emphasize the importance of purifying the soul, improving behavior, and developing virtue as a manifestation of a person's faith. The classical Islamic scholarly tradition has produced a rich heritage on how to educate the human soul toward perfect character, through monumental works of scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Al-Farabi, who systematically described the path to true happiness through the formation of noble character (Alamin et al., 2023). This approach puts forward the development of spiritual awareness, control of desires, and the habituation of good behavior as the main pillars in forming a person of good character. For centuries, this concept has been a primary reference in Islamic education in many parts of the world, shaping generations that are not only intellectually intelligent but also morally noble. However, along with the changing times and social structures, questions have arisen about how this classical concept can remain relevant and applicable in facing the complexity of modern life. Islamic values can in fact be applied in practice to develop human quality if they are carried out within a clear framework (Darmawan, 2021). The gap between the ideals of moral teaching and the reality of people's behavior continues to be a prominent issue and calls for reinterpretation and integration with contemporary approaches. Character education based on akhlakul karimah can no longer be understood narrowly as a set of normative teachings, but requires a broader and deeper elaboration in line with the needs of the times.

The development of positive psychology, as a relatively new branch of psychology, brings fresh air to efforts to develop character education with a more scientific and measurable approach. Positive psychology, pioneered by Martin Seligman and his followers, shifts from psychology's traditional focus on pathology and mental disorders toward the study of happiness, character strengths, and human well-being (Siddiqui et al., 2024). This approach stresses the importance of identifying and developing the positive potential of every individual, rather than only correcting existing weaknesses and shortcomings. Positive psychological factors have been shown to help a person persevere and stay committed to the tasks they undertake (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Concepts such as core virtues, character strengths, resilience, and post-traumatic growth are central to positive psychology, which offers an applicable framework for developing human potential more optimally. The match between the values taught in akhlakul karimah and the findings of positive psychology opens opportunities for a productive synthesis between the classical Islamic tradition and modern science. Both emphasize the importance of developing the potential for goodness in humans and seeking a higher meaning of life, although they use different languages and approaches. Psychological well-being and healthy social relationships are also

an important part of a person's quality of life (Darmawan, 2023a). Positive psychology's recognition of the importance of moral and spiritual values as a key component of human well-being confirms that the teachings of akhlakul karimah are not merely religious dogma, but have a strong scientific basis. The integration of these two approaches is highly promising for producing a more comprehensive and applicable concept of character education in the contemporary era.

Akhlakul karimah as a value system in Islam covers a very broad spectrum, from the relationship between humans and God, to relationships with fellow humans, and to the universe and the surrounding environment. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, patience, gratitude, humility, and ihsan are examples of praiseworthy traits that are the main targets of Islam-based character education (Nur'Aini et al., 2024). These values appear clearly in social behavior, such as care and generosity toward others (Khayru et al., 2025). The development of akhlakul karimah cannot be separated from worship and social dealings (muamalah), because the two are interrelated and form a whole in a Muslim's view of life. The process of forming character in the Islamic tradition involves various methods, such as role modeling, habituation, advice, and educative punishment, all of which aim to internalize noble values within learners. Honest and consistent role modeling by a leader or educator has been shown to shape a positive atmosphere and behavior around them (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). This approach recognizes that humans have an innate potential for both good and evil, and the task of education is to direct that potential toward goodness through continuous guidance and training. The concept of tazkiyatun nafs, or purification of the soul, is central to moral education, in which individuals are encouraged to keep improving themselves and cleansing the heart of blameworthy traits through worship, reflection, and good deeds. The Islamic scholarly tradition has also developed specific methods to measure and evaluate moral development, although they are more qualitative and subjective than modern psychometric approaches. The assessment of character should be value-based and as objective as possible so that its results can be trusted (An Nafisah et al., n.d.). This conceptual richness is a valuable asset for efforts to integrate classical Islamic values with contemporary approaches in character education.

Modern positive psychology offers various concepts and instruments that can enrich and strengthen the implementation of character education based on akhlakul karimah in both formal and nonformal educational settings. The classification of character strengths and virtues developed by Peterson and Seligman (Masduki, 2024), for example, presents six universal virtues consisting of wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, which have many points in common with the values of akhlakul karimah. The psychometric instruments developed in positive psychology allow character strengths to be measured more objectively and in a standardized manner, and can complement traditional evaluation methods in moral education. The strength-based approach developed in positive psychology is in line with the principles of Islamic education, which emphasize developing learners' positive potential rather than only focusing on correcting weaknesses. Every person's personality differs, so each individual's character strengths need to be identified accurately before they are developed (Darmawan, 2017). The concept of resilience and the ability to rise from adversity corresponds to the values of patience, trust in God (tawakkul), and optimism taught in Islam as part of akhlakul karimah. Well-maintained psychological well-being also strengthens a person's endurance in facing pressure (Mardikaningsih & Wardoyo, 2025). Research in positive psychology on the factors that contribute to happiness and well-being provides scientific justification for spiritual practices that have long been part of religious tradition. The integration of positive psychology and the teachings of akhlakul karimah makes it possible to create a character education approach that is based not only on religious values but also supported by strong scientific evidence. This synthesis opens the way for developing a character education model that is more effective, measurable, and scientifically accountable without losing its spiritual essence.

The main challenge in integrating classical Islamic values with modern positive psychology lies in the quite significant epistemological and methodological differences between the two traditions, which require serious effort to bridge. The classical Islamic scholarly tradition is built on revelation and the authority of sacred texts as the main source of knowledge, while positive psychology is grounded in empirical scientific methods that emphasize observation, measurement, and hypothesis testing. The normative-deductive approach used in the Islamic tradition differs from the descriptive-inductive approach that characterizes positive psychology, so creative thinking is needed to find productive common ground. The language and terminology used in the two traditions also differ greatly, so careful interpretation and translation of concepts are needed to avoid misunderstanding and reductionism. Some parties may worry that integration with positive psychology will reduce the spiritual richness of the teachings of akhlakul karimah to a set of secular psychological concepts that lose their religious essence (Kusumo et al., 2024). Conversely, other parties may doubt the scientific validity of akhlakul karimah concepts, which are considered untestable empirically and too normative. These concerns show that the integration of the two traditions cannot be done carelessly, but requires a careful process involving various disciplines. An open and adaptive attitude toward the development of knowledge is needed so that dialogue between the two traditions can proceed (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2023). Nevertheless, this challenge is in fact an opportunity to develop an interdisciplinary approach that enriches both traditions and produces a more comprehensive understanding of character education. Differences in perspective that are well managed can give rise to useful new ideas (Darmawan, 2024).

The main problem that arises in efforts to integrate the classical values of akhlakul karimah with modern positive psychology is the lack of an adequate conceptual framework to bridge the two traditions systematically and

comprehensively. The various integration efforts made so far remain partial and fragmentary, touching only certain aspects of the two approaches without building a complete and structured relationship. A lack of deep understanding of the conceptual richness of the akhlakul karimah tradition among modern psychologists and educators leaves much potential untapped and not optimally used. A lack of understanding of positive psychology among scholars and practitioners of Islamic education gives rise to resistance and suspicion toward an approach regarded as foreign and out of line with religious teachings. Prejudice between parties that is left uncorrected will widen the gap in understanding between them (Sajjapong et al., 2022). The absence of a clear integration framework often causes character education practice to run on two separate tracks, namely normative religious education and empirical psychological education, without meaningful dialogue and mutual enrichment. As a result, character education becomes less effective because it does not make full use of the strengths of both approaches. Moral education becomes too normative and dogmatic without the support of psychological understanding of how values can truly take root in an individual (Masduki, 2024). On the other hand, the positive psychology approach often overlooks the spiritual and transcendent dimensions that are at the core of character education in Islam. This gap causes the loss of opportunities to create character education that is more holistic, scientific, and spiritual at the same time.

Although there are various concepts and theories from the two traditions that have the potential to be synergized, there is as yet no practical guidance on how to apply them concretely in curriculum design, teaching methods, and character education evaluation systems. Teachers and educators are often confused about how to translate abstract concepts of morality and character strengths into meaningful and measurable learning activities. The current character education curriculum is often still normative and gives little room for the systematic and planned development of character strengths. The teaching methods used are also still dominated by lecture and advice approaches, which are less effective in internalizing values deeply in learners. A teacher's teaching style and parental support strongly influence learners' interest in learning (Safitri & Darmawan, 2023), while learning that adjusts to learners' needs is more readily accepted (Kurniawan & Darmawan, 2021). The evaluation systems used have not been able to accurately measure learners' character development, because the available instruments are still limited and not well standardized (Rawana et al., 2018). The absence of a clear applicable model causes efforts to integrate akhlakul karimah and positive psychology to stop at the level of discourse without touching actual educational practice. Practitioners need concrete examples of how to design character education programs that integrate the two approaches, complete with implementation steps and indicators of success.

The need for a character education concept that integrates the values of akhlakul karimah with modern positive psychology is becoming increasingly urgent amid the moral crisis affecting the younger generation and the growing complexity of contemporary life. Various social problems such as dishonesty, intolerance, violence, and consumerist behavior, which are increasingly common among adolescents, show that the current approach to character education has not been able to provide adequate solutions. This moral decline among adolescents shows the need for strong cooperation between families and schools in instilling values (Anshorullah et al., 2025). An education system that is too oriented toward cognitive aspects and academic achievement has neglected the development of the affective and moral aspects that are at the core of character formation (Hermawan & Kusniasari, 2023). The noble values taught in religion and culture are often not well internalized because the way they are delivered is inappropriate and irrelevant to the reality of young people's lives today. The value of justice, for example, needs to be instilled early so that it is truly realized in practice (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2025). The positive psychology approach, based on scientific evidence, offers a promising alternative for developing character in a more planned and measurable way, but it is often regarded as secular and lacking a strong spiritual foundation. The integration of these two approaches can produce a character education concept that is based not only on solid religious values but also supported by scientifically accountable methodology.

This study is directed at examining, formulating, and constructing a comprehensive conceptual framework regarding a character education model based on the values of akhlakul karimah integrated harmoniously with a modern positive psychology approach. Through this theoretical synthesis, the study aims to produce a solid conceptual framework as well as an applicable practical guide for educational institutions in designing curriculum structures and holistic student character development. Stemming from the achievement of these objectives, the implementation of character education is expected not merely to stop at the doctrinal-normative realm, but to transform into a pedagogical intervention that is far more effective, measurable, and impactful. In turn, this integrative model is projected to shape a student profile that possesses not only spiritual and moral nobility of character (akhlakul karimah), but also mental toughness, psychological resilience, and adaptive capacity to provide constructive contributions and public benefit for the dynamics of broader societal life.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a literature study design to explore and synthesize various thoughts on the integration of akhlakul karimah values with positive psychology in character education. As outlined by Beins (2017), qualitative research enables researchers to understand social phenomena from a rich and complex perspective, as

well as to capture the meanings contained within various texts and discourses serving as data sources. The literature study approach was chosen because this topic requires an extensive exploration of classical Islamic scholarship, the development of modern positive psychology, and various integration efforts previously conducted by prior researchers. This method allows researchers to access and analyze various primary and secondary sources, including classical books on morals, positive psychology journals, and publications on character education, to build a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study. As explained by Kapur (2018), qualitative research with a literature study approach demands researchers to perform critical analysis and deep interpretation of the texts serving as data sources, rather than merely summarizing or passively describing the content of the literature. The researcher acts as an active reader who extracts implications, identifies patterns, and builds interconcept relationships that might not be visible upon surface reading. Thus, this study not only produces a description of what is already known, but also generates new knowledge through a process of synthesis and conceptual reconstruction.

The research procedure was designed to ensure that the data collection and analysis process is conducted systematically and accountably in accordance with qualitative research standards. The first stage is the formulation of clear and focused research questions, which subsequently serve as a guide in determining the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the literature sources to be reviewed. Literature searches were conducted through various academic databases such as Google Scholar using a combination of keywords relevant to the research topic, such as akhlakul karimah, positive psychology, character education, and the integration of Islamic values. The sources found were then selected based on quality criteria, such as author credibility, publisher reputation, and substantive relevance to the research topic. As recommended by Beins (2017), critical evaluation of literature sources is crucial to ensure that only valid and reliable information is used in the analysis. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques, where researchers identified main themes emerging from the literature and organized them into a systematic and coherent framework. Kapur (2018) emphasizes that thematic analysis enables researchers to observe patterns and interconcept relationships that would remain invisible through linear reading alone. Synthesis was performed by integrating findings from various sources into a logical and comprehensive narrative, resulting in a conceptual model of integration between akhlakul karimah and positive psychology. The validity of the findings was enhanced through source triangulation, namely by comparing and contrasting views from various different authors, as well as through an audit trail documenting every step of the research process in detail.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The integration between the values of akhlakul karimah and positive psychology requires careful mapping of key concepts from each tradition to identify meeting points and complementary relationships that can serve as a basis for developing a coherent conceptual framework. Within the tradition of akhlakul karimah, concepts such as tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul), mahmudat (praiseworthy traits), and fadhail (virtues) become the primary focus in efforts to form noble character. Meanwhile, in positive psychology, concepts such as character strengths, virtues, flourishing, and resilience become central concerns in developing human potential optimally. Both traditions equally recognize that humans possess an innate potential for goodness and that this potential can be developed through continuous training, habituation, and reflection. Both also equally emphasize the importance of balance among cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects in character development, as well as recognize that true happiness and well-being cannot be achieved without adequate moral and spiritual development (Masduki, 2024). This strong meeting point serves as a solid foundation for integration efforts that will yield a richer and more applicable concept of character education. This careful mapping also enables the identification of concepts within one tradition that can enrich and clarify concepts within the other, thereby creating a productive and mutually enriching dialogue between the two approaches.

The classification of character strengths and virtues developed in positive psychology shows a remarkable alignment with the values of akhlakul karimah taught in the Islamic tradition, opening opportunities for developing more standardized measurement instruments to evaluate moral development. The six universal virtues identified by Peterson and Seligman, namely wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence, have clear counterparts in akhlakul karimah concepts such as hikmah, syaja'ah, rahmah, 'adl, 'iffah, and ihsan. The character strengths under each of these virtues, such as creativity, honesty, kindness, leadership, forgiveness, and spirituality, are also traits highly valued in Islamic teachings and are main targets in moral education (Keshavarzi et al., 2024). Positive psychology's recognition of spirituality as one of the fundamental character strengths shows that the transcendent dimension, which has long been at the core of akhlakul karimah teachings, has scientific legitimacy within the framework of modern psychology. Instruments such as the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), developed in positive psychology, can be adapted and contextualized to measure learners' moral development with a more objective and standardized approach. Even so, measurement still needs to take into account the human side of learners so that it does not stop at numbers alone (Darmawan, 2023). This more standardized measurement allows educators to monitor learners' progress more accurately and to design more targeted interventions to develop particular character strengths. Measurement results are only useful when they are managed and used systematically (Darmawan,

2023). Thus, this integration not only enriches the theoretical framework of character education but also provides practical tools that have long been lacking in traditional moral education.

The strength-based approach that characterizes positive psychology is in line with the principles of Islamic education, which emphasize developing learners' positive potential and give room for optimism and appreciation of each individual's uniqueness. In the akhlakul karimah tradition, every human being is born in a state of fitrah, that is, with an innate potential for goodness and truth, and the task of education is to help actualize that potential optimally. An approach that focuses too much on correcting weaknesses and mistakes, which often dominates educational practice, contradicts this principle of fitrah and can cause feelings of inferiority and loss of motivation in learners (Warsah et al., 2024). Excessive supervision and correction can also erode a person's sense of independence and responsibility (Mardikaningsih et al., 2024). The strength-based approach, in contrast, invites educators to identify and develop the strengths learners already have, and to use those strengths as a foundation for overcoming the weaknesses and challenges they face. Research in positive psychology shows that developing character strengths not only increases individual well-being and happiness, but also improves resilience, academic performance, and positive social relationships. A supportive school environment has been shown to foster learners' independence and learning achievement (Haqiqi & Darmawan, 2023). This principle is highly relevant to Islamic teachings, which stress the importance of optimism, hope, and the belief that every individual has the potential to become a better person. Teachers and educators in the Islamic tradition are also taught to see the potential for goodness in every student and to help develop it with compassion and patience. Integrating the strength-based approach into moral education will make the process of character formation more positive, empowering, and in accordance with human fitrah.

The concept of resilience in positive psychology aligns strongly with the values of patience, trust in God (tawakkul), and optimism taught in akhlakul karimah, and integrating the two can produce a more comprehensive approach to developing mental and spiritual resilience in learners. Resilience is defined as the ability to endure, recover, and even grow from adversity, a skill that is greatly needed in facing life's various challenges and difficulties. In Islamic teachings, patience (sabr) is regarded as one of the noblest praiseworthy traits and is the key to success in facing trials and tests (Ubaidillah et al., 2024). Tawakkul, or surrendering to Allah after making maximum effort, is also a form of spiritual resilience that gives calm and inner strength in facing difficult situations. Optimism, as an attitude of expecting good results from every effort and the belief that Allah's help is always near, is a very important source of strength for resilience. Integrating the evidence-based positive psychology approach to resilience with Islamic teachings on patience, tawakkul, and optimism can produce resilience development programs that are not only psychologically effective but also spiritually meaningful. Learners can be trained to develop resilience skills such as emotion regulation, problem solving, and seeking social support, while at the same time strengthening the spiritual belief that with every hardship there is ease and that trials are part of the process of growth. Skills of this kind can be trained in a planned way through well-directed programs (Hariani et al., 2025). This integrated approach will equip learners with solid resilience, both psychologically and spiritually, to face life's various challenges.

The concept of post-traumatic growth in positive psychology offers a very valuable perspective for understanding how suffering and hardship can become a catalyst for spiritual and moral growth, in line with the Islamic teaching on the wisdom behind every trial. Research in positive psychology shows that many individuals who experience traumatic events actually report positive growth in various aspects of their lives, including a greater appreciation of life, deeper relationships with others, the discovery of new strengths, and more mature spiritual development (Abu-Raiya & Sulleiman, 2021). In the akhlakul karimah tradition, trials and tests are seen as an inseparable part of human life that serve to test faith, cleanse sins, and raise a person's rank in the sight of Allah. Concepts such as contentment (ridha), sincerity (ikhlas), and gratitude (syukur) in facing misfortune are teachings that guide Muslims to see the wisdom and goodness behind every event that seems negative. Integrating the concept of post-traumatic growth with the Islamic teaching on the wisdom of trials can produce a richer understanding of how suffering can become a means for character development and spiritual maturity. Educators can help learners develop a more positive perspective on the difficulties they experience and see them as opportunities to learn and grow. A change in perspective that lasts requires education and awareness that are built continuously (Gautama & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Character education programs that integrate these two approaches can teach learners to respond to difficulties constructively, find meaning in suffering, and develop strong spiritual resilience. This approach is highly relevant in the context of education in the modern era, which is full of pressures and challenges. Islamic religious education itself continues to develop, and this calls for innovation in the way it is taught (Fajar et al., 2025).

The development of happiness and well-being as an educational goal, which is the main focus of positive psychology, resonates strongly with the ultimate aim of Islamic education, which stresses happiness in this world and the hereafter through the development of noble character. Positive psychology defines well-being as a condition in which individuals can function optimally, have strong positive emotions, engage in meaningful activities, have quality social relationships, and feel that their lives have purpose and meaning. In Islamic teachings, true happiness (sa'adah) is measured not only by worldly pleasure, but also by closeness to Allah, obedience to His commands, and readiness for the eternal life of the hereafter (Warsah et al., 2024). Values such as qana'ah (feeling content), gratitude, and ridha are

teachings that guide Muslims toward a happiness that does not depend on external conditions, but on a calm and satisfied inner state. Integrating the concept of well-being in positive psychology with the concept of sa'adah in the Islamic tradition can produce a more comprehensive understanding of happiness that covers material and spiritual dimensions, worldly and otherworldly. This integrated character education will help learners develop authentic and sustainable happiness, not only through achievement and material possessions, but also through the development of spiritual awareness and harmonious relationships with God, fellow human beings, and nature. Fast-paced progress needs to be balanced with depth of thought so that life still feels meaningful (Darmawan, 2023a). Learners will be taught to find meaning and purpose in their lives within a framework of religious values that gives direction and guidance for all aspects of their lives. Ethical values that are practiced consistently also shape a positive and sustainable culture (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022).

The integration of the concepts of akhlakul karimah and positive psychology also opens opportunities to develop a more holistic approach to character education by accommodating the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in a balanced and planned manner. Character education that focuses only on the cognitive aspect, such as knowledge about values, will not be enough to form strong character because knowledge alone does not guarantee appropriate behavior. Likewise, education that focuses only on the affective aspect, such as feelings and emotions, without consistent behavioral training, will also not be effective because feelings can fluctuate and are unstable (Heidari et al., 2016). Education that focuses only on the behavioral aspect, such as habituation without understanding and internal motivation, will also not last long because behavior can change when there is no external supervision. Discipline and the ability to regulate oneself make good behavior last longer (Maharani & Darmawan, 2024). An integrated approach that combines these three aspects, by drawing on the conceptual richness of akhlakul karimah and the methodology of positive psychology, will produce character education that is more comprehensive and effective. Learners will not only understand moral values cognitively, but also feel them emotionally and practice them consistently in daily life. Understanding that is linked to practice also makes learners more engaged (Darmawan, 2024). This character development process can be designed in a planned way through various learning strategies involving reflection, discussion, simulation, and direct practice, and evaluated periodically to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement. The choice of appropriate media and methods influences learners' interest (Laili & Darmawan, 2024), while innovative strategies make these efforts more resilient to change (Mardikaningsih et al., 2024). With this comprehensive approach, character education will become more effective in forming learners of noble character.

Applying the positive psychology approach in moral education also gives greater attention to developing positive emotions and enjoyable experiences in the learning process, which have received little attention in traditional religious education that is often too serious and normative. Positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, hope, and love not only make learning more enjoyable, but also serve important functions in broadening perspective, increasing creativity, and strengthening social bonds (Setiawati & Achadi, 2024). A teacher's way of teaching and competence influence learners' motivation to learn (Mudzakkir & Darmawan, 2024; Latif & Darmawan, 2024). Research in positive psychology shows that positive emotions broaden a person's capacity to think and act, build lasting psychological resources, and increase resilience to stress and hardship (Isgett & Fredrickson, 2015). In the akhlakul karimah tradition, positive emotions such as gratitude (syukur), contentment (ridha), and mahabbah (love) are also highly valued and regarded as indicators of a person's spiritual health. Healthy emotional states keep a person attached and committed (Issalillah & Khayru, 2025). Integrating positive psychology's focus on positive emotions with Islamic teachings on the importance of gratitude and contentment can create a learning atmosphere that is more humane, empowering, and enjoyable. Educators can design learning activities that not only transfer knowledge about morals, but also evoke positive emotions that strengthen learners' motivation and commitment to the values taught. Learning media that are used well also support academic achievement (Rizal & Darmawan, 2024). Positive experiences in learning morals will make it easier for learners to internalize these values and make them part of their self-identity (Yunita et al., 2023). This approach will also help overcome the perception that religious education is heavy, boring, and full of prohibitions, by presenting learning experiences that are more joyful and meaningful.

The narrative and storytelling approach developed in positive psychology to build meaning and identity can be integrated with the tradition of stories in the Qur'an and hadith, which are rich in moral messages and inspiration for character formation. The stories of the prophets, companions, and pious people found in the Qur'an and classical Islamic literature are a very valuable resource for character education that can be delivered in ways that are engaging and relevant to the modern generation (Ervina et al., 2025). Stories that are packaged attractively and distributed through the right media reach learners more easily (Darmawan & Fajar, 2024). The narrative approach allows learners to identify with the characters in the stories, feel their emotions and struggles, and learn from the experiences and lessons contained in them. Through stories, abstract values such as honesty, patience, courage, and sacrifice become more concrete and easier to understand, and leave a deeper impression than conveying values directly. Learners can also be invited to write stories about their own experiences in practicing moral values, which helps them reflect on and internalize those values in a more personal way. Opportunities for expression like this strengthen learners' independence and creativity (Darmawan, 2024c). This narrative approach also allows learners to see that a life journey full of challenges and failures is a natural part of human growth, and that everyone has the potential to change and become better. Belief in one's own ability helps a person

adapt to change (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). By integrating the narrative approach from positive psychology with the wealth of stories in the Islamic tradition, character education can become more vivid, relevant, and meaningful for learners. The experience of listening to, telling, and writing stories will strengthen learners' understanding of and commitment to the values of akhlakul karimah.

The positive psychology approach also stresses the importance of quality social relationships as a key component of well-being, which is strongly in line with Islamic teachings on ukhuwah, silaturahmi, and social concern as part of akhlakul karimah. Research shows that individuals with strong and meaningful social relationships tend to be happier, healthier, and more resilient to stress than those who are socially isolated (Brilliant et al., 2024). In Islam, building and maintaining good relationships with fellow human beings is a strongly emphasized religious command, as reflected in various teachings on silaturahmi, mutual help, and respect for the rights of others. The concept of ukhuwah Islamiyah teaches that fellow Muslims are brothers, who love one another, help one another, and pray for one another, which is the foundation for creating a harmonious and prosperous society (Fadhillah et al., 2024). A sense of solidarity needs to be safeguarded because it changes easily as the way people interact shifts (Eddine & Darmawan, 2025). Character education that integrates these two approaches will teach learners not only about the importance of good social relationships, but also give them practical skills to build and maintain those relationships. Learners will be trained in effective communication skills, empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution, all of which are part of akhlakul karimah in interacting with others. Learning that is designed attractively can maintain cooperation and empathy among learners (Putra et al., 2024). Group activities, social projects, and community service can be a means for learners to practice these social relationship skills in real contexts. Assignment methods that involve interaction are related to learners' learning activeness (Rahmawati & Darmawan, 2024), and social education fosters a broader concern for others (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Thus, character education not only forms individuals of noble character but also builds a community that cares for and supports one another. Social inclusion is also important so that everyone feels accepted in their social circle (Darmawan, 2023).

The development of reflection and mindfulness as part of character education, integrated with spiritual practices such as muhasabah, dhikr, and tafakkur in the Islamic tradition, can produce a highly effective approach for developing self-awareness and self-control in learners. Positive psychology and mindfulness-based interventions have shown their effectiveness in improving psychological well-being, reducing stress, and developing better emotion regulation. Safeguarding mental health needs serious attention because it relates to the pressures a person faces (Khayru & Arifin, 2025). In the Islamic tradition, muhasabah, or self-introspection, is a highly recommended practice for evaluating one's actions, correcting mistakes, and improving the quality of worship and social dealings (Warsah et al., 2024a). Dhikr as a reminder of Allah's presence and tafakkur as contemplation of Allah's creation are practices that develop spiritual awareness and closeness to God. Integrating mindfulness practices from positive psychology with spiritual practices from the Islamic tradition can produce self-awareness development programs that are not only psychologically effective but also rich in spiritual dimensions. Learners can be taught to observe their thoughts, feelings, and behavior with full awareness and without judgment, which is the core of mindfulness, while at the same time connecting these observations with higher spiritual values and goals. High academic pressure affects learning outcomes, so stress management needs to be taught (Bayhaqi & Darmawan, 2025). Daily reflection practice, spiritual journaling, and meditation grounded in Islamic values can be a means for learners to develop deep self-awareness and better self-control. Flexible arrangement of activities makes it easier for learners to carry out reflection routinely (Mardikaningsih, 2025), and attention to long-term health also needs to be built as a habit from an early age (Issalillah, 2025). This integrated approach will equip learners with powerful tools to understand themselves, manage their emotions and behavior, and keep growing toward the perfection of character.

The evaluation of character education that integrates akhlakul karimah and positive psychology requires developing instruments that measure not only knowledge of values, but also the development of character strengths, psychological well-being, and real moral behavior in daily life. Instruments developed in positive psychology, such as character strengths scales and well-being scales, can be adapted and contextualized with the values of akhlakul karimah to produce measurement tools that are more comprehensive and relevant (Tiwari & Masih, 2022). The performance of a program needs to be monitored with clear measures so that it can be held accountable (Barzani et al., 2022). Continuous formative evaluation, such as character portfolios, reflective journals, and self-assessment, can give a richer and more accurate picture of learners' character development than summative tests conducted only at the end of a learning period. The success of a program is influenced by many factors, so evaluation needs to cover all of them (Darmawan, 2024). Assessment by peers, parents, and teachers can also provide broader and more varied perspectives on learners' moral behavior in various life settings. Grades in religious subjects need to be linked to the character that is visible in daily life (Al Mursyidi & Darmawan, 2023), and parental attention also influences learning achievement, so their role deserves to be involved (Umroh & Darmawan, 2024). Constructive, development-oriented feedback is an important component of character education evaluation, helping learners identify strengths and areas for improvement and plan steps for improvement ahead. Feedback needs to be accurate and given on time to be useful (Mardikaningsih et al., 2025). Good evaluation serves not only to measure achievement, but also as a learning and development tool that helps learners keep

growing in morals and character. With an integrated, evidence-based evaluation system, character education can become more accountable and effective in achieving its goals.

The concept of fitrah in Islam, which holds that every human being is born pure and with an innate potential for goodness, is in line with the basic principle of positive psychology that humans have a natural capacity to grow and achieve meaningful happiness (Arif, 2023). Recognition of this fitrah becomes the foundation for an optimistic and empowering approach to education, which sees every learner as a valuable individual with the potential to become a good person. Every child has the right to receive a proper education and to be valued (Hariani et al., 2021), but access that is not yet evenly distributed shows that this support has not been felt by all learners (Rojak & Khayru, 2022). Educators who understand fitrah will not treat learners as blank slates to be filled with knowledge and values from outside, but as seeds with the potential to grow and develop if given a supportive environment and the right nutrients. School culture and parenting style also help shape learners' character (Dena & Darmawan, 2024). Positive psychology also recognizes that humans have a natural tendency toward growth, self-actualization, and the search for meaning, which corresponds to the concept of fitrah in Islam. The integration of the concept of fitrah and positive psychology produces an optimistic view of character education: that every individual can develop into a person of noble character and well-being if given the right support and guidance. This approach avoids the pessimistic view that bad character is innate and cannot be changed, and rejects harsh and judgmental educational approaches that often kill learners' spirit and potential. Learners' bad habits are more effectively overcome with a nurturing approach than a judgmental one (Alfaaza et al., 2025). Instead, educators are encouraged to create a positive, supportive, and empowering learning environment in which every learner feels valued and encouraged to develop their best strengths and potential. Education that is friendly and adaptable to each learner's needs, including those who need special attention, strengthens this sense of being valued (Adriani et al., 2025), as does equal treatment (Darmawan, 2024). Thus, integrated character education will become a joyful and dignifying process, in line with the goal of Islamic education to form human beings who are perfect in character and close to Allah. Islamic values can also serve as an ethical foundation for positive social change (Azizi & Darmawan, 2025).

The synergy between the approach of akhlakul karimah and positive psychology in character education requires the development of teaching models that integrate classical methods such as exemplary modeling (keteladanan), habituation, and advice with modern methods such as project-based learning, collaborative learning, and socio-emotional skill development. The method of exemplary modeling, which constitutes the most effective method in moral education according to scholars, can be reinforced with positive psychology's understanding of the importance of modeling and social learning in behavior formation (Abdussalam et al., 2024). The habituation method, which relies on the repetition of good behavior until it becomes a habit, can be enriched with the positive psychology approach on habit formation based on an understanding of how habits are formed and maintained. Advice and warning methods can be combined with coaching and mentoring approaches developed in positive psychology, which emphasize the development of potential and individual empowerment rather than merely delivering lectures and warnings. Modern methods such as project-based learning can be utilized to provide students with direct experience in practicing moral values within real contexts, while developing various important 21st-century skills. This integrated teaching model will yield a richer, more varied, and more effective learning experience in developing students' character comprehensively. Educators need to be trained to master these various methods and be capable of selecting and combining them appropriately in accordance with learning objectives and the diverse characteristics of students.

CONCLUSIONS

The integration between classical values of akhlakul karimah and the modern positive psychology approach can yield a more comprehensive, applicable, and contemporary-relevant concept of character education. Both approaches share a strong meeting point regarding the recognition of innate human potential for goodness, the importance of developing character strengths, and the ultimate goal of achieving meaningful happiness and well-being. The classification of character strengths in positive psychology aligns with the values of akhlakul karimah, thus enabling the development of more standardized measurement instruments for moral education evaluation. Concepts such as resilience, posttraumatic growth, and well-being in positive psychology can enrich and clarify traditional concepts such as sabar (patience), tawakal (trust in God), and sa'adah (happiness) in Islamic teachings. Strengths-based approaches, a focus on positive emotions, and the development of high-quality social relationships represent areas where positive psychology offers significant contributions to the reinforcement of moral education. Modern methods such as project-based learning and socio-emotional skill development can be integrated with classical methods like exemplary modeling (keteladanan) and habituation to create more effective teaching models. The evaluation of character education integrating both approaches requires instruments measuring knowledge, character strengths, psychological well-being, and moral behavior comprehensively. Thus, the integration between akhlakul karimah and positive psychology offers a novel pathway for developing more effective and meaningful character education.

The implications of this research for educational practice entail the necessity of developing character education curricula that systematically and deliberately integrate akhlakul karimah values with positive psychology concepts.

Teachers and educators need to receive training regarding positive psychology approaches and how to integrate them with moral instruction, as well as be equipped with appropriate evaluation instruments and methods. Schools and educational institutions need to create a positive and supportive learning environment that encourages the development of students' character strengths and psychological well-being. Parents need to be involved in the character education process through programs providing an understanding of this integrated approach and how to apply it at home. Suggestions for future research include conducting empirical studies examining the effectiveness of the integrated character education model developed across various educational settings and age groups. Research concerning the development of valid and reliable character measurement instruments, as well as longitudinal research on the long-term impact of integrated character education on students' moral development and well-being, is also highly necessary. Comparative research between conventional and integrated character education approaches can provide evidence regarding the superiority of the integrated approach. With more comprehensive follow-up research, the concept of character education based on akhlakul karimah integrated with positive psychology will continue to evolve and provide a significant contribution toward shaping a young generation possessing noble character and well-being in the modern era.

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